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Comment:



If Mann Goes, So May Our Latin Policy

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Three months ago, President Johnson's right-hand man for Latin America, Ambassador Thomas C. Mann, was looking forward hopefully to at least two years in which to bring order out of the chaotic Latin American situation he inherited in early 1964. Congress' election-year failure to listen to reason over three Latin American commodity imports — meat, sugar and coffee — has deeply discouraged Mr. Mann.

If a victorious Johnson Administration loses Mr. Mann's services as Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, the U.S. will face a special kind of crisis over Latin America. Mr. Mann officially denies he wants to leave his post, but such details are routine in these situations.

TUG OF WAR

For unless President Johnson is very careful, Latin American policy will once more become involved in a tug-of-war within

the executive side of government.

Washington has been split for several years over Latin America. One group with members scattered thru the State Department, AID, the Pentagon, the CIA and the big lending agencies, believe the U.S. should give economic help to 'developing' countries, no matter if they have pseudo-communist, neo-socialist or just plain anti-American regimes. This is the "soft" line.

The other point of view would give the U.S. political as well as economic objectives in Latin America. This line holds that the U.S. should try to develop representative democracies as well as flourishing economies in Latin America. It is called the "hard" line.

Mr. Mann, called an exponent of the hard line, has indeed given our policy for Latin America a political content as well as economic objectives. And the results have been excellent. Latin Americans

understand the U.S. is not simply ceasing to fight the cold war in their region. Nor is Washington today indifferent to old-style military coups. Significantly, they have ceased and de facto governments are moving toward elections.

POLICY DANGER

If Mr. Mann cannot be persuaded to stay and our Latin American policy once more becomes a football between the "soft" and the "hard" liners in the executive side, then we'll have no real policy for Latin America at all.

The executive side of government, if itself at war, cannot hope to prove effective against the nationalistic madness of Congress. Nor can the U.S. successfully meet new challenges raised by new gov-

ernments in London and Moscow.

There is reason to believe that our international opposition in the battle for Latin America will stiffen in the near future. The signs say the Russian and the Chinese communists may both speed up their tempo.

This would be a very bad moment for the U.S. to return its foreign policy for Latin America to its former state of chaos.